



## Fact Sheet: Is the H1N1 Nasal Spray Vaccine Right for You?

In order to vaccinate all high risk people as early as possible – and to vaccinate everyone who wishes – we are encouraging health care providers and schools to offer the nasal spray vaccine wherever appropriate. Please read through this Fact Sheet, and talk to your health care provider to determine if the nasal spray vaccine is right for you.

### General supply:

- More than 20% of the total H1N1 vaccine that we will get in Maine is in the form of a nasal spray or Live, Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV).
- About a third of the H1N1 vaccine we expect to receive first will be in the nasal spray form.
- Almost half of the Thimerosal-free vaccine we will get in Maine is in the nasal spray form.
- **Not using the nasal spray vaccine means that high risk people will go without the vaccine, even as we see more H1N1 illness in Maine.**
- **Not using nasal spray vaccine means that some people who request Thimerosal-free vaccine will not be able to get it.**

### Timing:

- H1N1 nasal spray vaccine can be given at the same time as the seasonal flu shot.
- H1N1 nasal spray vaccine and seasonal nasal spray vaccine **should not** be given together. There is a one month waiting period between giving the H1N1 nasal spray vaccine and the seasonal nasal spray flu vaccines.

- Children under 10 need two doses, at least one month apart, for full immunity-- similar to the flu shot. **Children who only get one dose of vaccine when they need two doses may have reduced protection from H1N1 flu.**

### Safety:

- Nasal spray flu vaccine is not new. It has been used successfully in many settings for seasonal flu vaccination since 2003.
- The 2009 H1N1 nasal spray vaccine is recommended for use in healthy people ages 2 through 49 who are not pregnant.
- If you get the nasal spray vaccine (which contains a weakened live virus), it is **very unlikely** that others around you will get sick.
- People who get the nasal spray vaccine **do not** put most others they are around (infants, pregnant women, or people with health conditions) in any danger.
- **If you are breastfeeding, you can still get the nasal spray vaccine.**
- **If you have contact with people with diabetes, people with asthma, or people with HIV, you can still get the nasal spray vaccine.**

**People who should not get the nasal spray vaccine include:**

- People younger than 2 years of age;
- Pregnant women;
- People 50 years of age and older;
- People with a medical condition that places them at higher risk for complications from influenza, including those with chronic heart or lung disease, such as asthma or reactive airways disease; people with medical conditions such as diabetes or kidney failure; or people with illnesses that weaken the immune system, or who take medications that can weaken the immune system;
- Children younger than 5 years old with one or more episodes of wheezing in the last year;
- Children or adolescents receiving aspirin therapy;
- People who have had Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS), a rare disorder of the nervous system, within 6 weeks of getting a flu vaccine,
- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs or who are allergic to any of the nasal spray vaccine components.
- Health care workers who are providing medical care for patients who require special environments in the hospital because they are profoundly immunocompromised (those who work in bone marrow stem cell transplant units) should not get the nasal spray vaccine.

**Side effects and contraindications:**

- People who have nasal congestion should consider delaying vaccination with nasal spray, because congestion can limit the delivery of the vaccine.
- In children, side effects can include runny nose, headache, wheezing, vomiting, muscle aches, and fever.
- In adults, side effects can include runny nose, headache, sore throat, and cough. Fever is not a common side effect in adults receiving the nasal spray flu vaccine.

**Stay informed.**

**Check these flu web sites:**

[www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)  
[www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu)  
[www.maine flu.gov](http://www.maine flu.gov)

**Maine CDC Public Call-in Numbers:**

Monday - Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

1-888-257-0990

NextTalk (deaf/hard of hearing)  
(207) 629-5751

**Email your questions to:**

[flu.questions@maine.gov](mailto:flu.questions@maine.gov)

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